

# IBN AL-WARDĪ'S *RISĀLAH AL-NABA' 'AN AL-WABA'*, A TRANSLATION OF A MAJOR SOURCE FOR THE HISTORY OF THE BLACK DEATH IN THE MIDDLE EAST<sup>1</sup>

MICHAEL DOLS

THE BLACK DEATH,<sup>2</sup> the name given to the plague pandemic of the mid-eighth/fourteenth century, caused a dramatic decline in human population. The plague had a significant impact on Muslim society fully comparable to its rôle in late medieval Europe.

<sup>1</sup> This study is part of a larger work on the history of the Black Death in the Middle East. I am very grateful to Professor Philip Hitti of Princeton University and Professor Adel Sulaiman Gamal of the American University in Cairo for reading the translation and making many helpful suggestions.

<sup>2</sup> The contemporary Latin chroniclers did not use the term "Black Death" but called the pandemic variously "the Great Mortality," "the Great Pestilence," "the Plague of Florence," etc. See Philip Ziegler, *The Black Death* (London, 1969), pp. 17-18; F. A. Gasquet, *The Black Death of 1348 and 1349* (London, 1908), pp. 7-8; L. Fabian Hirst, *The Conquest of Plague: A Study of the Evolution of Epidemiology* (Oxford, 1953), p. 32; J. F. D. Shrewsbury, *A History of Bubonic Plague in the British Isles* (Cambridge, 1970), p. 37; Stephen d'Irsay, "Notes to the Origin of the Expression 'atra mors,'" *Isis*, 8 (1926), pp. 328-332. The Muslim witnesses referred to the pandemic as: (1) "the Universal Plague" (*al-tā'ūn al-āmm*): Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, "Badhl al-mā'ūn fī fadl al-tā'ūn," Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah MS no. 2353 *taṣawwuf*, fol. 123b; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Durar al-kāminah* (Hyderabad, A.H. 1348-1350), vol. 3, pp. 192, 382; al-ʿAynī, "ʿAqd al-jumān fī taʾrīkh ahl al-zamān," Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah MS no. 1574, *taʾrīkh*, chap. 24, pt. 1, fol. 85; Ibn Ḥabīb, "Durrah al-aslāk fī dawlah (mulk) al-atrāk," Cairo University Library, photocopy no. 22961, p. 358; as-Suyūṭī, "Mā rawāhu l-wā'ūn fī akhbār al-tā'ūn," ed. by Alfred von

Kremer, "Ueber die grossen Seuchen des Orients nach arabischen Quellen," *Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Philosophisch-Historische Classe)*, 96, book 1 (Vienne, 1880), p. 155; (2) "the Plague of the Kindred" (*tā'ūn al-ansāb*): Ibn Ḥabīb, "Durrah al-aslāk," p. 358, and his "Tadhkirat al-nabīh fī ayyān al-Manṣūr wa banīh," British Museum Or. Add. MS no. 7335, fol. 145b; Ibn al-Wardī, "Risālah al-naba' 'an al-waba'," (see text); J. Sauvaget, "Les Trésors d'Or" de Sibṭ ibn al-ʿAjāmī: Matériaux pour servir à l'histoire de la ville d'Alep," *Institut Français de Damas* (Beirut, 1950), vol. 2, p. 10; (3) "the Great Destruction" (*al-fanā' al-kabīr*): al-Maqrizī, *al-Mawāʿiz wa-l-iʿtibār bi-dhikr al-khiṭaʾ wa-l-āthār* (Bulāq, 1854), vol. 1, p. 637; al-ʿAynī, "ʿAqd al-jumān," chap. 24, pt. 1, p. 85; also *fanā' ʿazīm bil-tā'ūn*: Ṣāliḥ ibn Yaḥyā, *Taʾrīkh Bayrūt*, ed. by P. L. Cheikh, 2nd ed. (Beirut, 1927), p. 140; *al-fanā' al-ʿazīm*: Ibn Ḥabīb, "Tadhkirah al-nabīh," fol. 144b; Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm al-zāhirah fī mulūk Miṣr wa-l-Qāhirah* (Cairo, 1929-1956), vol. 10, p. 233; (4) "the Great Plague" (*al-tā'ūn al-ʿazīm*): al-Muʿminī, "Kitāb futūḥ al-naṣr min taʾrīkh mulūk Miṣr," Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah MS no. 2399 *taʾrīkh*, vol. 2, fol. 295; (5) "the Great Pestilence" (*al-waba' al-ʿazīm*): Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm*, vol. 10, p. 233; *faṣl al-kabīr*: Ibn Tag

The pandemic probably originated in the Central Asiatic steppe where a permanent reservoir of plague bacilli is maintained among the wild rodents.<sup>3</sup> The *risālah* of Ibn al-Wardī discusses this remote geographical origin of the Black Death and substantiates the contention that the disease was transmitted across Central Asia along the overland trade route to the Crimea.<sup>4</sup> From the *History* of Ibn al-Wardī we learn that the author gathered his information about the course of the plague pandemic from Muslim merchants returning from the Crimea to Syria. They related specifically that the plague occurred in Rajab 747/October-November 1346 in the land of the Uzbeks and destroyed their villages and towns. Then, it spread to the Crimea and to Byzantium (Rūm). A *qāḍī* "of the Crimea," probably in Kaffa, is reported to have said that the mortality caused by the plague reached 85,000.<sup>5</sup>

Ibn al-Wardī describes in his *risālah*, particularly, the dissemination of plague in Syria-Palestine and the immediate consequences of the natural disaster in his own city, Aleppo. Moreover, the author demonstrates a knowledge of the three major religious tenets regarding plague during the Black Death in the Middle East: (1) plague is a martyrdom and a mercy from God for the Muslim and a punishment for the infidel;<sup>6</sup> (2) a Muslim should not enter nor flee from a plague-stricken land;<sup>7</sup> and (3) plague was not caused by infection but was sent directly by God.<sup>8</sup> These principles, which

(7) "the Year of the Annihilation" (*sanat al-fanā*): Ibn Taghri Birdī, *al-Nujūm*, vol. 10, p. 211. These examples refer to the pandemic as a proper noun; for the common substantives, see note 17 below.

<sup>3</sup> Wu Lien-Teh, *A Treatise on Pneumonic Plague* (Geneva, 1926), p. 2; Hirst, *The Conquest of Plague*, p. 12; Robert Pollitzer, *Plague*, World Health Organization (Geneva, 1954), p. 13.

<sup>4</sup> Most of the modern accounts of the Black Death begin with the introduction of the pandemic by Genoese merchants to Sicily and Italy from the Crimea. This is based on the report of Gabriel de Mussi: *Historia de Morbo s. Mortalitate quae fuit Anno Dni MCCCXLVII*, ed. by Henschel in H. Haeser, *Archiv für die gesamte Medizin*, vol. 2 (Jena, 1842), pp. 26-59; text reprinted in Haeser, *Lehrbuch der Geschichte der Medizin und der epidemischen Krankheiten*, 3rd ed., vol. 3 (Jena, 1882), pp. 157-161. The text is also found in A. G. Tononi, "La peste dell'anno 1348," *Giornale Ligustico*, vol. 11 (Genoa, 1884), pp. 144-152.

<sup>5</sup> Ibn al-Wardī, *Ta'rīkh*, vol. 2 (Baghdad, 1969), p. 492. (A similar report is found in Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa-l-nihāyah fī-l-ta'rīkh*, vol. 14 [Cairo, n.d.], p. 225). This work by Ibn al-Wardī is an abridgement of the chronicle of Abū l-Fidā' with a continuation from 729/1329 to 749/1349. Russian scholars have used the translation of this work by Ibn al-Wardī in volume 1 of W. Tiesenhausen, *Shornik materialov otnosiashchikhsia k istorii Zolotoi*

*ordy* [Documents Concerning the History of the Golden Horde], (St. Petersburg, 1884).

<sup>6</sup> al-Bukhārī, *Le Recueil des Traditions Mahomé-tanes*, ed. by M. L. Krehl and T. W. Juynboll (Leiden, 1862-1908), vol. 2, p. 209, nos. 1 and 2; vol. 4, p. 60, nos. 5 and 6. This and the following two tenets are the subject of a large number of Arabic plague treatises written from the time of the Black Death to modern times.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 59, no. 1, p. 60, no. 3. In contrast to the Muslim interdiction, flight was universally counselled by the European Christian writers on the plague; see A. M. Campbell, *The Black Death and Men of Learning* (New York, 1931), p. 65.

<sup>8</sup> al-Bukhārī, *Le Recueil des Traditions Mahomé-tanes*, vol. 4, p. 57. Muḥammad is supposed to have denied the presumably pre-Islamic Arab belief in infection; pestilence was from God alone (Ibn Ḥajar, "Badhl al-mā'ūn," fols. 93b, 101a). The plague treatise of the Andalusian polygraph, Muḥammad ibn 'Abdallāh ibn al-Khaṭīb, has attracted considerable scholarly attention because of the author's forthright argument for contagion based on empirical observation ("Muqni'ah al-sā'il 'an al-maraḍ al-hā'il," Escorial MS no. 1785, fols. 42b-43a; the text has been edited by M. J. Müller, "Ibnul-k

influenced communal behavior and interpretation during the time of the Black Death, were based on the *ḥadīth* literature resulting from the recurrences of the Plague of Justinian in early Islamic history.<sup>9</sup>

Ibn al-Wardī was an eyewitness of the Black Death; he died in Aleppo of plague on 27 Dhū l-Hijjah 749/18 March 1349.<sup>10</sup> The *risālah* was written shortly before the author's death.<sup>11</sup> The work has been frequently quoted by later Muslim historians<sup>12</sup> and writers of plague treatises because it is the only extensive, historical account contemporary with the Black Death in the Middle East which has survived.<sup>13</sup> Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, an

*Conquest of Plague*, p. 51, and T. W. Arnold and A. Guillaume, eds., *The Legacy of Islam* (Oxford, 1931), pp. 340-341.

<sup>9</sup> See Procopius, *History of the Wars*, ed. and trans. by H. B. Dewing, vol. 1 (New York, 1914), book 2, chap. 26, pp. 450-455; V. Seibel, *Die Grosse Pest zur Zeit Justinians I* (Dillingen, 1857); J. C. Russell, "That Earlier Plague," *Demography*, vol. 5, no. 1 (1968), pp. 174-184; and especially J.-N. Biraben and J. LeGoff, "La Peste dans le Haut Moyen Âge," *Annales. Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, vol. 24, pt. 6 (1969), pp. 1484-1510. For a study of the recurrences of the Plague of Justinian and their rôle in early Islamic history see my "Plague in Early Islamic History," *JAOS* (in press); concerning the important Syrian plague, known as the "Plague of 'Amwās ('Amawās)," see J. Sourdél-Thomine "Amwās," *EI*<sup>2</sup>. A general account of epidemics (not strictly plague) in the Middle East during the medieval period is given by Alfred von Kremer in the introduction to his edition of al-Suyūṭī's "Mā rawāhu l-wā'ūn fī akhbār al-ṭā'ūn" ("Ueber die grossen Seuchen," pp. 107-143).

<sup>10</sup> "Ibn al-Wardī," *EI*<sup>1</sup> (M. Ben Cheneb) and *EI*<sup>2</sup> (Gamal el-Dīn el-Shayyāl); *GAL*, II, pp. 140-141, *SII*, pp. 174-175; George Sarton, *Introduction to the History of Science* (Baltimore, 1927-1948), pt. 1, vol. 3, pp. 962-963; Charles Pellat, *Langues et Littérature Arabes* (Paris, 1970); Lucien Leclerc, *Histoire de la Médecine Arabe* (Paris, 1876), vol. 2, pp. 279-280.

<sup>11</sup> Ibn al-Wardī, *Ta'rikh*, vol. 2, p. 350.

<sup>12</sup> al-Maqrīzī quotes a number of verses from the *risālah* as well as incorporating other information from Ibn al-Wardī in his important narrative account of the Black Death (*al-Sulūk li-ma'rifat duwal al-mulūk* [Cairo, 1936-1958], pt. 2, vol. 3, pp. 772-791; see Gaston Wiet's translation of this account with the omission of the poetry: "La Grande Peste Noire en Syrie et en Égypte," *Études d'Orientalisme*

*dédiées à la Mémoire de Lévi-Provençal*, vol. 1 [Paris, 1962], pp. 367-384). See also the modern history of Aleppo by M. R. al-Ṭabbakh, *I'lām al-nubalā' bi-ta'rikh Ḥalab al-shahbā'* (A.H. 1341-1345), vol. 2, pp. 427-428.

<sup>13</sup> The major contemporary Arabic accounts of the Black Death that have survived were written in Andalusia. They include: (1) Ibn al-Khaṭīb (see note 8 above); (2) Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn Khātimah, "Taḥṣīl al-gharaḍ al-qāsid fī taḥṣīl al-maraḍ al-wāfid," Escorial MS no. 1785, fols. 49a-105b. Aside from a fragment published by Müller ("Ibnul-khaṭīb's Bericht über die Pest," pp. 28-34), this work has been partially translated by T

Egyptian historian who composed the best-known plague treatise in the mid-ninth/fifteenth century,<sup>14</sup> remarked: "This was the best of what was said about the plague, the most descriptive, and the finest in its allusions."<sup>15</sup> Despite the praise of Ibn Ḥajar, this translation is presented in simple prose without regard to the original's meter, rhyme, and elaborate literary conceits; the original style of the *risālah* is *saj'*.<sup>16</sup>

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plague literature related to the Black Death in the Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyah manuscript includes the following: (1) Ibn al-Wardī's "Risālah al-naba' 'an al-waba'" (see note 16 below) and his short "Qasidah fī al-ṭā'ūn" (fols. 197a-197b); (2) a poetic narrative described as an *account* (*muṭāla'ah*) by Bahā' al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 756/1355) to al-Salāḥ al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363 of the plague in Damascus) on the plague in Egypt in A.H. 749 (fols. 197b-198b); (3) al-Subkī quotes a few verses of the poetry of Ibrāhīm al-Mi'mār (fol. 198b) who died during the Black Death in Cairo; (4) an essay by al-Ṣafadī to al-Subkī describing the spread of the plague in Palestine and Syria in A.H. 749, particularly Damascus. The Cairo version of this short account (fols. 198b-200a) is the most complete; (sections of the poem are found in al-Maqrizī, *al-Sulūk*, pt. 2, vol. 3, pp. 788-791, and in Ibn Abī Ḥajalah, "Daf' al-niqmah fī-l-salāf 'alā nabī al-raḥmān," Escorial MS no. 1772, fols. 79a, 80a); (5) Two verses (fol. 200a; see also Ibn Abī Ḥajalah, "Daf' al-niqmah," fol. 78b) by Shihāb al-Dīn Faḍlallāh about the plague in Damascus where he died in Dhū l-Ḥijjah 759; (6) a few verses (fol. 200a) by Ibn Nubātah (see his *Diwān* [Cairo, 1905], p. 50); and (7) a poem on the plague in Egypt by Ṣadr al-Dīn ibn al-Haymī (fols. 200b-201a).

<sup>14</sup> F. Roesenthal, "Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī," *EI*<sup>2</sup>; *GAL* II, p. 67, *SH*, p. 74; Sabri K. Kawash, "Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (1372-1449 A.D.): A Study of the Background, Education and Career of a 'Ālim in Egypt," unpublished PhD. thesis, Princeton University, 1969; Manfred Ullmann, *Die Medizin im Islam* (Leiden, 1970), p. 248. The important plague treatise of Ibn Ḥajar is "Badhl al-mā'ūn fī faḍl al-ṭā'ūn"; the author brings together most of the relevant historical and theological material related to plague in Islam. The work is the primary source for all later tracts, particularly for al-Suyūṭī.

After an initial draft of the treatise in A.H. 819, Ibn Ḥajar rewrote the work following the plague of 848 (when he was struck by plague himself); Ibn Ḥajar died in 852. The treatise exists in a number of manuscript copies in the Middle East and Europe.

<sup>15</sup> Ibn Ḥajar, "Badhl al-mā'ūn," fol. 127b.

<sup>16</sup> The text of the *risālah* has been published in the *Diwān* of Ibn al-Wardī in *Majmū'at al-jawā'ib* (Istanbul, A.H. 1300), edited by Fāris al-Shidyāq, pp. 131-341; the *risālah* comprises pp. 184-188. The variant readings have been helpful since the printed text alone is unsatisfactory. The manuscripts which have been consulted are: (1) British Museum Or. MS no. 3053, fols. 81a-83a; (2) Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyah MS no. 102 *majmū'*, fols. 195a-197a, entitled "Maqāmah fī ṭā'ūn sanat tis' wa arba'in." This is followed by a short *qasidah* on plague attributed to Ibn al-Wardī by the copyist in a marginal note (fol. 197a). (3) Ibn Abī Ḥajalah, "Daf' al-niqmah," fols. 81a-83a; unfortunately this manuscript is very badly copied and does not greatly aid in the clarification of ambiguous passages. And (4) Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, "Badhl al-mā'ūn," fols. 124b-12

*An Essay on the Report of the Pestilence*<sup>17</sup> (p. 184)<sup>18</sup>

God is my security in every adversity. My sufficiency is in God alone. Is not God sufficient protection for His servant? Oh God, pray for our master, Muḥammad, and give him peace. Save us for his sake from the attacks of the plague and give us shelter.

<sup>17</sup> *al-waba'*. The common designation of "plague" in Arabic is *ṭā'ūn*. Although *ṭā'ūn* may have the generic sense of "an epidemic," it is used consistently in the late medieval Arabic texts in the specific sense of "a plague." Almost every plague treatise from the Black Death to the nineteenth century distinguishes between the general term for epidemic diseases and plague. The general term for "epidemic" or "pestilence" is *waba* (*wabā'*). The following statement, which is found in most of the plague treatises, makes the distinction quite clear: "Every *ṭā'ūn* is a *waba'*, but every *waba'* is not a *ṭā'ūn*" (Ibn Ḥajar, "Badhl al-mā'ūn," fols. 12a, 14a, 15a; Ibn Abī Ḥajalah, "Daf' al-niqmah," fol. 41b; Ibn Khātimah, "Taḥṣil," fol. 87a; etc.). Ibn Ḥajar states that the designation of *ṭā'ūn* gives the sense of the "pricking" (*wakhz*) of the *jinn* (or *rimāh al-jinn*, see E. W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon* [London, 1884], p. 1856) while *waba'*, *waja'* and *dā'* do not; the *waba'* is more general than *ṭā'ūn* whereas *waja'* and *dā'* designate pain from the *ṭā'ūn* or another illness (Ibn Ḥajar, "Badhl al-mā'ūn," fol. 16b). In many cases it is difficult to determine whether an illness is plague in the Arabic texts without additional corroborative evidence, particularly since the word *waba'* may refer to other epidemic diseases such as cholera, typhoid, etc. It would be unprofitable to cite the vast number of times that the words *waba'* and *ṭā'ūn* are employed; however, the following designations for "plague" were also used during the Mamlūk Period. (The list incorporates the work on plague terminology found in David Neustadt [Ayalon], "The Plague and Its Effects upon the Mamlūk Army," *JRAS* [1946], p. 67, note 2). (1) *ṭa'n*: Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-zuhūr* (Bulāq, A.H. 1311-1312), vol. 2, pp. 18, 64; Mostafa rev. ed., vol. 5c, pp. 124-125, vol. 5d, pp. 79, 296, 299, 302, 306-307, 309-310, 312, 375; *Unpublished Pages of the Chronicle of Ibn Iyās*, ed. by Mostafa, pp. 71-73; al-Suyūṭī, "Mā rawāhu l-wā'ūn," ed. by von Kremer, p. 146; (2) *faṣl*: Khalil al-Zāhirī, *Zubda kashf al-mamālik* (Paris, 1894), p. 112; Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *Ḥawādith al-duḥūr fī madā al-ayyām wa-l-shuhūr*, ed. by William Popper, *University of California Publications in Semitic Philology*, vol. 8 (Berkeley, 1930-1931), p. 337; Ibn Iyās,

*Badā'i' al-zuhūr*, vol. 2, p. 21; Mostafa rev. ed., vol. 5d, pp. 95, 289, 360; Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm*, vol. 10, p. 211; (3) *fanā'*: Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Inbā' al-ghumr bi-anbā' al-'umr* (Cairo, 1969), vol. 1, p. 315; al-Jawharī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs wa-l-abdān* (Cairo, 1970), vol. 1, p. 472; Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm*, vol. 10, p. 233, vol. 11, pp. 26, 66, 203; al-Maqrizī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. 2, p. 637; al-Maqrizī, *al-Sulūk*, pt. 2, vol. 3, pp. 779, 780; Ibn Ḥajar, "Badhl al-mā'ūn," fol. 45b; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-zuhūr*, vol. 2, p. 64; Mostafa rev. ed., vol. 5c, pp. 30, 37, 287, vol. 5d, p. 79; (4) *mautān*: al-Maqrizī, *al-Sulūk*, pt. 2, vol. 3, pp. 774, 777 and Paris MS copy (Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyah), vol. 3, p

The plague frightened and killed. It began in the land of darkness.<sup>19</sup> Oh, what a visitor! It has been current for fifteen years. China was not preserved from it nor could the strongest fortress hinder it. The plague afflicted the Indians in India. It weighed upon the Sind. It seized with its hand and ensnared even the lands of the Uzbeks.<sup>20</sup> How many backs did it break in what is Transoxiana! The plague increased and spread further. It attacked the Persians, extended its steps toward the land of the Khitai,<sup>21</sup> and gnawed away at the Crimea.<sup>22</sup> It pelted Rūm with live coals and led the outrage (*p. 185*) to Cyprus and the islands. The plague destroyed mankind in Cairo. Its eye was cast upon Egypt, and behold, the people were wide-awake.<sup>23</sup> It stilled all movement in Alexandria.<sup>24</sup> The plague did its work like a silkworm.<sup>25</sup> It took from the *ḫirāz* factory its beauty and did to its workers what fate decreed.<sup>26</sup>

Oh Alexandria, this plague is like a lion which extends its arm to you.

Have patience with the fate of the plague, which leaves of seventy men only seven.

Then, the plague turned to Upper Egypt. It, also, sent forth its storm to Barqah. The plague attacked Gaza, and it shook 'Asqalān severely. The plague oppressed Acre. The scourge came to Jerusalem and paid the *zakāt*<sup>27</sup> [with the souls of men]. It overtook those

<sup>19</sup> Von Kremer, "Ueber die grossen Seuchen," p. 136, note 1, identifies this expression as "northern Asia." Cf. Sauvaget, "Les Trésors d'Or" de Sibṭ ibn al-'Ajamī," vol. 2, p. 10.

<sup>20</sup> "Uzbeks" were the Mongol tribes subject to the Shaybānids in the region east and southeast of the Ural River and the areas of the Turgai and Sary-Su Rivers (lands today occupied by the Kirghiz of the Middle Horde and Little Horde). The origin of the name "Uzbek" ("Özbeg") is obscure but was commonly used by the mid-eighth/fourteenth century. (See V. Barthold, "Shaibānids," *EI*; R. Grousset, *The Empire of the Steppes* [New Jersey, 1970], pp. 474 (map), 478-479).

<sup>21</sup> Is it not altogether clear what peoples Ibn al-Wardī means by the "Khitai"; he seems to refer to the Qara-Khitai who established an empire in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries A.D. in eastern Turkestan. This Mongol dynasty was conquered by the later Mongol invasion of Jenghiz-Khān and in the fourteenth century was the Khānate of Jagatai (Grousset, *The Empire of the Steppes*, pp. 159-160, 164-166, 233-236, 341-346 [Mogholistan]; V. Barthold, "Qara Khitai," *EI*).

<sup>22</sup> This may be dated to A.H. 747 (Ibn al-Wardī, *Ta'rikh*, vol. 2, p. 492). Beside the European source mentioned in note 4 above, see C. S. Bartsocas, "Two Fourteenth Century Greek Descriptions of the 'Black Death'," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, vol. 21, no. 4 (October, 1966), pp. 394-400. Based on the histories of Nicephoros Gregoras and Ioannes Cantacuzenos (John VI),

Bartsocas shows that the Byzantines believed that the origin of the pandemic was in southern Russia (Scythia), before it struck Constantinople in 1347 A.D. (pp. 395, 398).

<sup>23</sup> *Qur'ān*, 79:14. See Richard Bell, *The Qur'ān* (Edinburgh, 1939), vol. 2, p. 633; Bell has commented: "Lit. 'in the waking'; usually taken as meaning a wide open plain."

<sup>24</sup> Cf. al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, pt. 2, vol. 3, p. 777.

<sup>25</sup> An allusion to the *ḫirāz* textile manufacture mentioned in the following passage. See *EI*<sup>1</sup> and M. A. Marzouk, "The Tīrāz Institution in Medieval Egypt," *Studies in Islamic Art and Architecture in Honor of Professor K. A. C. Creswell* (

people who fled to the al-'Aqsā Mosque, which stands beside the Dome of the Rock. If the door of mercy had not been opened, the end of the world would have occurred in a moment. It, then, hastened its pace and attacked the entire maritime plain. The plague trapped Sidon and descended unexpectedly upon Beirut, cunningly. Next, it directed the shooting of its arrows<sup>28</sup> to Damascus. There the plague sat like a king on a throne and swayed with power, killing daily one thousand or more and decimating the population. It destroyed mankind with its pustules.<sup>29</sup> May God the Most High spare Damascus to

<sup>28</sup> This is a common metaphor for the plague attack, which conveys the sense of *fā'ūn* from *fā'ana*, "to strike" or "to pierce." (Other examples are found in Ibn Khaṭīb, "Muqni'at," fol. 42b; al-Maqrizī, *al-Sulūk*, pt. 2, vol. 3, p. 790; al-Manṣūrī, *Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyah* MS no. 102 *majmū'at*, fol. 202a; al-Subkī quoted in Ibn Ḥajar, "Badhl al-mā'ūn," fol. 130a). This idea of being pierced by plague swords or arrows is related to the popular belief in the evil *jinn* as the agents of plague; al-Jāḥiẓ records the Arab belief in the Devil (*al-Shayṭān*) who sends the *jinn* with plague (*Kitāb al-ḥayawān* [Cairo, n. d.], vol. 6, pp. 218-220; see also Ernst Zbinden, *Die Djinn des Islam und der Alt-orientalische Geisterglaube* [Berne, 1953], pp. 75-96). This is attested by the common man's employment of magical practices and beliefs. For example, one legend relates the story of a peasant of Bilbais, in Lower Egypt, who mysteriously visited the *jinn* in the underworld where they were preparing their plague arrows. He was told that one-third of the inhabitants of Bilbais would be destroyed by plague but not the peasant and his family. When he returned to his town, he found that the *jinn* had inflicted plague on its people as he had been told. (René Basset, *Mille et un contes, récits et légendes Arabes* [Paris, 1924], vol. 1, pp. 123-125). The same belief in *jinn* was observed in Morocco at the beginning of this century; the *jinn* were held responsible for plague and other epidemics by shooting poisoned arrows at their victims (Edward Westermarck, *Ritual and Belief in Morocco* [London, 1926], vol. 1, p. 271). The use of poisoned arrows by angels is, also, attested to by Christian sources during the Black Death. At the time of the siege of Kaffa in 1346 A.D., the beleaguered Christians saw the heavenly arrows strike the Mongols and cause the epidemic. Other metaphors which were commonly used for plague include a cup of poison, a warrior or invading army, a predatory animal, lightning or fire, and a serpent (see note 55 below).

<sup>29</sup> *bathrah*. There is a medical distinction between the plague buboes and the pustules or cutaneous

marks on the body of the plague victim. Very rarely are these two symptoms clearly distinguished by contemporary observers; Ibn Khātimah is the only writer who gives a detailed description of the pustules of the skin ("Taḥṣīl," fol. 82a). Before death, "earthy" stains or blotches appeared on the body. These skin eruptions, including reddish to black marks, were due to subcutaneous hemorrhages. The pustules (*qurūḥ*) are described as distinct from the buboes (*ṭawā'in*); the latter term for the plague boils is used infrequently in the later Middle Ages although it is common in the early historical works and the Arabic translations of the classical medical works. *Qurūḥ* is often employed in the Middle Eastern plague treatises. Ibn Khātimah states that the pustules resembled blistering (*tafqi'*) accompanied by inflammation. The author, also, refers to dark spots (*dharrah sūd*) which resemble grains (*ḥubūb*) and contain watery fluid when broken. However, Ibn Khātimah cites an earlier source (Ibn 'Ayyād) where *qurūḥ* is used in a general sense: "The origin of the plague is the *qurūḥ* arising in the body" ("Taḥṣīl," fol. 87a). This lack of distinction between the glandular buboes and the cutaneous pustules is common in most of the Arabic texts. For example, Ibn Ḥajar cites a commentary on Abū Muslim where the pustule and bubo (*bathrah wa waram*) are interpreted as one general symptom of plague. As Ibn Ḥajar states: "They appear enflamed with blackening around them; they become green or red, the dark redness of a violet.... They appear in the groin and armpits but mostly on the hands and fingers and the rest of the body" ("Badhl al-mā'ūn," fol.

pursue its own path and extinguish the plague's fires so that they do not come close to her fragrant orchards.

Oh God, restore Damascus and protect her from insult.

Its morale has been so lowered that people in the city sell themselves for a grain.<sup>30</sup>

The plague struck al-Mazzah<sup>31</sup> and appeared in Barzah.<sup>32</sup> The plague, then, came to Ba'labakk and compounded itself with the town as its name is compounded.<sup>33</sup> It recited in Qārā:<sup>34</sup> "Halt, friends both! Let us weep."<sup>35</sup> The plague cleansed al-Ghasūlah.<sup>36</sup> It

al-mā'ūn," fols. 11b, 15a, 119a; *qurūh*: see above and Ibn Ḥajar, "Badhl al-mā'ūn," fol. 12a; Ibn Abī Sharīf, "Kitāb fī aḥkām al-ṭā'ūn," Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyah MS no. 102, *majāmi'*, fol. 157a; (3) *bathrah*: Ibn Ḥajar, "Badhl al-mā'ūn," fols. 13a, 129a; Ibn Ḥabīb, "Durrah al-aslāk," p. 358; Anon., "Risālah fī wabā' al-ṭā'ūn," al-Azhar MS no. 251, fol. 14b; al-Maqrīzī, *as-Sulūk*, pt. 2, vol. 3, p. 775 uses the term to describe the bubo behind the ear; *bathr* (collective): Ibn Ḥajar, "Badhl al-mā'ūn," fols. 12a-12b; al-Ḥijāzī, "Juz' fī l-ṭā'ūn," fol. 148b; Ibn Abī Ḥajalah, "Daf' al-niqmah," fol. 142b; Ibn Ḥabīb, "Durrah al-aslāk," p. 358; Ibn Ḥajar describes it as a small boil (*dummal*), "Badhl al-mā'ūn," fol. 45a; (4) *ḥalā'*: Ibn Abī Ḥajalah, "Daf' al-niqmah," fol. 80b; (5) *ṭulū'*: al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, pt. 2, vol. 3, p. 774; (6) *tafqi'*: Ibn Khātimah, "Taḥṣīl," fol. 82a; and (7) *nufāḥah*: Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta'riḥ al-duwal wa-l-mulūk* (Beirut, 1936-1942), vol. 9, p. 26. The buboes: (1) *kubbah*: Ibn Ḥajar, "Badhl al-mā'ūn," fol. 128a; al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, pt. 2, vol. 3, p. 775 *et passim*; Ibn Furāt, *Ta'riḥ*, vol. 9, p. 26; al-Ṣafadī, Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyah MS no. 102, *majāmi'*, fols. 199b, 200a; (2) *khurāj*: Ibn Abī Sharīf, "Kitāb fī aḥkām al-ṭā'ūn," fol. 160a; Ibn Abī Ḥajalah, "Daf' al-niqmah," fol. 75a; Ibn Ḥajar, "Badhl al-mā'ūn," fols. 16a, 116a, 119a, 127b; *al-aurām al-khurrajah*: al-Shaqūrī, "Taḥqīq al-naba'," fol. 111a; *khurjān*: Ibn Ḥajar, "Badhl al-mā'ūn," fol. 76a margin, fol. 100b identifies the term as *khurāj al-dummal*; Ibn Khaṭīb, "Muqni'at," fols. 39b, 44b; (3) *waram*: Ibn Sīnā, *Kitāb al-qanūn fī l-ṭibb* (Cairo, 1877), vol. 3, p. 121; Ibn Ḥajar, "Badhl al-mā'ūn," fols. 12a-12b, 45a; Ibn Abī Ḥajalah, "Daf' al-niqmah," fol. 145a; *aurām*: al-Shaqūrī, "Taḥqīq al-naba'," fol. 111a; Anon., "Risālah fī wabā' al-ṭā'ūn," al-Azhar MS no. 251, fol. 14b; (4) *dummal*: Ibn Ḥajar, "Badhl al-mā'ūn," fols. 45a, 78a, 100b; (5) *jaghalah*: Ibn Abī Ḥajalah gives this term as the designation of the bubo in

Abyssinia ("Daf' al-niqmah," fol. 145a); (6) *khaz-zah*: Ibn Ḥajar, "Badhl al-mā'ūn," fol. 77a; (8) *dharab*: Ibn Ḥajar, "Badhl al-mā'ūn," fols. 78a, 100b; (9) *ghuddah*: related to camel plague in Anon., "Risālah fī wabā' al-ṭā'ūn," al



eclipsed totally the sun of Shemsin<sup>37</sup> and sprinkled its rain upon al-Jubbah.<sup>38</sup> In al-Zababānī<sup>39</sup> the city foamed with coffins, and the plague brought misfortune<sup>40</sup> on Ḥimş and left it with three.<sup>41</sup> The plague domesticated itself in Ḥamāh,<sup>42</sup> and the banks of the river 'Aṣī became cold because of the plague's fever.

Oh Plague, Ḥamāh is one of the best lands, one of the mightiest fortresses.  
Would that you had not breathed her air and poisoned her, kissing her and holding her in your embrace.<sup>43</sup>

The plague entered Ma'arraḥ al-Nu'mān<sup>44</sup> and said to the city: "You are safe from me. Ḥamāh is sufficient for your torture. I am satisfied with that."

It saw the town of Ma'arraḥ, like an eye adorned with blackness, but its eyebrow decorated with oppression.

What could the plague do in a country where every day its tyranny is a plague?

The plague and its poison spread to Sarmīn.<sup>45</sup> It reviled the Sunnī and the Shī'ī. It sharpened its spearheads for the Sunnī and advanced like an army. The plague was spread in the land of the Shī'ī with a ruinous effect. To Antioch the plague gave its share. Then, it left there quickly with a shyness like a man who has forgotten the memory of his beloved. Next, it said to Shayzar<sup>46</sup> and to al-Ḥārim:<sup>47</sup> "Do not fear me. Before I come and after I go, you can easily disregard me because of your wretchedness. And the ruined places will recover from the time of the plague." Afterward, the plague humbled 'Azāz,<sup>48</sup> and took from the people of al-Bāb<sup>49</sup> its men of learning. It ravished Tel Bāshar.<sup>50</sup> The plague subjected Dhulūl<sup>51</sup> and went straight through the lowlands and the mountains. It uprooted many people from their homes.

Then, (p. 186) the plague sought Aleppo, but it did not succeed. By God's mercy the plague was the lightest oppression. I would not say that plants must grow from their seeds.

The pestilence had triumphed and appeared in Aleppo.

They said: it has made on mankind an attack.<sup>52</sup> I called it a pestilence.

How amazingly does it pursue the people of each house! One of them spits blood,<sup>53</sup> and everyone in the household is certain of death. It brings the entire family to their graves after two or three nights.

<sup>37</sup> Karl Baedeker, *Palestine and Syria, Handbook for Travellers* (Leipzig, 1898), p. 423.

<sup>38</sup> Possibly Jubbat Munaiẓira (Popper, "Systematic Notes," vol. 15, p. 17); a play on the word *jubbah*, meaning "a cloak."

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50 and map no. 13.

<sup>40</sup> *bikhalal*; this could be read *bijulal*, "with plague boils."

<sup>41</sup> This may possibly mean that plague increased the misfortune of Ḥimş threefold.

<sup>42</sup> Literally, the plague—like a person—lost its *luknah* (the mispronunciation of Arabic by a foreigner).

<sup>43</sup> *qurūn al-Ḥamāh* are the hills surrounding the city.

<sup>44</sup> Popper, "Systematic Notes," vol. 15, pp. 18, 49, and maps nos. 18 and 20.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17, 49, and maps nos. 18 and 20.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17 and map no. 20.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16 and map no. 18.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17, 52, and map no. 20.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 52, and map no. 18.

<sup>51</sup> Unidentified place-name.

<sup>52</sup> Literally, "it has a *kāf* and a *rā*" which means "an attack" (*karr*).

<sup>53</sup> This refers to the probable presence of pneumonic plague which is infectious and highly fatal whereas the bubonic form of plague is contagious and not usually fatal.

I asked the Creator of mankind to dispel the plague when it struck.  
Whoever tasted his own blood<sup>54</sup> was sure to die.

Oh God, it is acting by Your command. Lift this from us. It happens where You wish;  
keep the plague from us. Who will defend us against this horror other than You the Al-  
mighty?

God is greater than the plague which has captured and entered like an army among  
the peaceful, even as a madman.

Its spearheads are sharpened for every city, and I was amazed at the hated thing  
[i.e., the plague] which lies on the sharpened points.

How many places has the plague entered. It swore not to leave the houses without its  
inhabitants. It searched them out with a lamp. The pestilence caused the people of  
Aleppo the same disturbance. It sent out its snake<sup>55</sup> and crept along. It was named the  
"Plague of the Ansāb." It was the sixth plague to strike in Islam.<sup>56</sup> To me it is the death  
of which our Prophet warned,<sup>57</sup> on him be the best prayers and peace.

Aleppo — may God protect us from this disaster — is the land of toil.

The plague became a serpent, an evil thing which kills her people with its spit.

Oh, if you could see the nobles of Aleppo studying their inscrutable books of medicine.<sup>58</sup>  
They multiply its remedies by eating dried and sour foods. The buboes which disturb

<sup>54</sup> See preceding note

<sup>55</sup> The snake is particularly associated with the plague, e.g., al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, Paris MS copy, vol. 4, pp. 316-317; Ibn Ḥajar, "Inbā' al-ghumr," (H. Ḥabishī typescript); Ibn Abī Ḥajalah, "Daf' al-niqmah," fols. 83b-84a. This may have a *Qur'ānic* basis where *sūrah* lxxii associates the *jinn* with serpents; see Rudolf Kriss and Hubert Kriss-Heinrich, *Volks Glaube im Bereich des Islam* (Wiesbaden, 1960-1962), vol. 2, p. 15.

<sup>56</sup> The medieval chroniclers state the tradition established by al-Madā'inī that the number of the great and famous plagues in Islam (before the Black Death) were five; this obviously indicates the major recurrences of the Plague of Justinian in the Middle East. Most of the plague treatise writers take their histories of the early plagues from Ibn Abī-l-Dunyā's "Kitāb al-i'tibār," which incorporated the lost history of plagues by al-Madā'inī.

<sup>57</sup> This may refer to the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet: "The destruction of my people is by the piercing and the plague. It was said: Oh Prophet of God, this piercing we have known but what is the plague? He said: the pricking of your enemies is from the *jinn* and in everyone it is a martyrdom." According to Ibn Ḥajar's interpretation, Muslims are to die by battle and the plague ("Badhl al-mā'ūn," fols. 11b-12a, 17a-21b).

<sup>58</sup> The basic medical work on plague for the

physicians in the Middle East (and in Europe to a great extent) was Ibn Sīnā's *Qānūn fī al-ṭibb*; his interpretation is certainly the basis for the medical statements made in the plague treatises in the late Middle Ages. Ibn Sīnā derived most of his views on epidemics from Galen's *De differentiis febrium* (book I, chapter VI) which was translated into Arabic by Quṣā ibn Lūqā al-Ba'labakkī (d. ca. 300/912), who was also the author of two early works on infection and epidemics (*GAL*, *SI*, p. 366; Ernst Seidel, "Die Lehre von der Kontagion bei den Arabern," *Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin*, vol. 6 [Leipzig, 1913], p. 85). Galen, in turn, had developed the idea of Hippocrates (*Epidemics I and III*) that epidemics were caused by a miasma or corruption of the air. Through the *Qānūn* of Ibn Sīnā, this was the predominant etiological view in the Middle East and medieval Europe (see the *Qānūn*, vol. 3, pp. 64-65). Galen is responsible for enlarging on the classical theory of humours in Hippocrates' pathology of epidemics; thus, the humoral theory is conspicuous in the Latin and Arabic accounts. Specifically, the prevention and treatment of plague is directed toward improving the air and righting the humoral balance in the body; due to a common source, the Middle Eastern and Andalusian remedies are very similar in nature. Most of the specific antidotes in the Middle Eastern plague treatises are drawn from Ibn Sīnā or one of the numerous commentaries on his work.

men's healthy lives are smeared with Armenian clay.<sup>59</sup> Each man treated his humours and made life more comfortable. They perfumed their homes with ambergris and camphor, cyperus and sandal. They wore ruby rings and put onions, vinegar, and sardines together with the daily meal. They ate less broth and fruit but ate the citron and similar things.

If you see many biers and their carriers and hear in every quarter of Aleppo the announcements of death and cries, you run from them and refuse to stay with them.<sup>60</sup> In Aleppo the profits of the undertakers have greatly increased.<sup>61</sup> Oh God, do not profit them. Those who sweat from carrying the coffins enjoy this plague-time. Oh God, do not let them sweat and enjoy this. They are happy and play. When they are called by a customer, they do not even go immediately.

The Grey [*i.e.*, Aleppo] became blackened in my eyes because of the anxiety and deceit. (p. 187)

The sons of the coffins [*i.e.*, the undertakers] are themselves about to follow death.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>59</sup> This remedy is a good example of the immense influence of Galen on medieval medicine as well as of human credulity. Galen had advocated Armenian bole as an anti-pestilential specific in his *De simplicium medicamentorum temperamentis et facultatibus libri* (book II, chapter I). Armenian bole is an argillaceous earth brought primarily from Persia and Armenia; its deep red color is due to iron oxide in the clay. Galen first used it as an astringent for wounds and ulcers before he advocated it as a specific for pestilence. Armenian clay was recommended for both the prevention and treatment of the plague victim. Ibn Sīnā suggests using clay on the buboes (*Qānūn*, vol. 3, p. 222); for other references to Armenian clay in Arabic medicine, see Dorothee Thies, *Die Lehren der arabischen Mediziner Tabari und Ibn Hubal über Herz, Lunge, Gallenblase und Milz* (Bonn, 1968), p. 176. al-Maqrīzī is possibly referring to Armenian clay when he says that "some people devote themselves to coating their bodies with clay" (*al-Sulūk*, pt. 2, vol. 3, p. 763). It was, also, advised to drink Armenian clay on the authority of Galen (Ibn Khātimah, "Taḥṣīl," fol. 66b; Ibn Haydūr, "Risālah fī al-amrād," Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyah MS no. 183 *majāmi'*, fol. 105b; Tāshköprüzāde, "Majmū'ah al-shifā'," fols. 34b, 35a, 36b-37a); Ibn Abī Ḥajalah states in his plague tract, written shortly after the Black Death, that healing clay is "useful to drink for the plague, as Armenian [clay] and blue Bdelium" ("Kitāb al-ṭibb," Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyah MS no. 102 *majāmi'*, fol. 143a). Leo Africanus, also, witnessed

the use of Armenian clay in North Africa during the plague epidemics in the early tenth/sixteenth century (quoted in Jean Marchika, *La Peste en Afrique Septentrionale: Histoire de la Peste en Algérie de 1363 à 1830* [Algiers, 1927], p. 14). In Europe, Armenian bole was recommended during the Black Death by the papal physician Guy de Chauliac (see Raymond Crawford, *Plague and Pestilence in Literature and Art* [Oxford, 1914], p. 12) and by the Medical Faculty of the University of Paris (see Campbell, *The Black Death and the Men of Learning*, p. 68). The whole subject of earth-eating is exhaustively treated by Berthold Laufer in his monograph, "Geophany," *Field Museum of Natural History*, Publication no. 280, Anthropological Series, vol. 18, no. 3 (Chicago, 1930), pp. 101-198, especially pp. 150-155 for this phenomenon among the Persians and Arabs.

<sup>60</sup> Despite the prohibition against flight, there is considerable historical evidence for flight away from plague-stricken regions during the Black Death in the Middle East.

<sup>61</sup> According to al-Maqrīzī, many men in Cairo left their normal occupations to profit from the funerals. Some turned to reciting the funeral prayers at the head of processions while others took up the treatment of the ill or washing and carrying the dead; all received unusually large salaries. The carrier demanded six dirhams, and the gravedigger demanded fifty dirhams for a ditch (*al-Sulūk*, pt. 2, vol. 3, pp. 782-783).

<sup>62</sup> *banāt na'ash*.

We ask God's forgiveness for our souls' bad inclination; the plague is surely part of His punishment.<sup>63</sup> We take refuge from His wrath in His pleasure and from His chastisement in His restoring.

They said: the air's corruption kills.<sup>64</sup> I said: the love of corruption kills.  
How many sins and how many offenses does the crier call our attention to.<sup>65</sup>

Among the things which exasperated the Muslims and brought suffering is that our enemy, the damned people of Sīs,<sup>66</sup> are pleased by our trial. They act as if they are safe from the plague — that there is a treaty so that it will not approach them or that they have triumphed over it. Our Lord does not create us as an enticement for those who disbelieve.

The dwellers of Sīs are happy with what afflicts us, and this is what you can expect from the enemies of the true religion.

God will spread it to them soon so that He will put plague upon plague.

This plague is for the Muslims a martyrdom and a reward, and for the disbelievers a punishment and a rebuke. When the Muslim endures misfortune, then patience is his worship. It has been established by our Prophet, God bless him and give him peace, that the plague-stricken are martyrs. This noble tradition is true and assures martyrdom. And this secret should be pleasing to the true believer. If someone says it causes infection and destruction, say: God creates and recreates. If the liar disputes the matter of infection and tries to find an explanation, I say that the Prophet, on him be peace, said: who infected the first? If we acknowledge the plague's devastation of the people, it is the will of the Chosen Doer.<sup>67</sup> So it happened again and again.

I take refuge in God from the yoke of the plague.<sup>68</sup> Its high explosion<sup>69</sup> has burst into all countries and was an examiner of astonishing things. Its sudden attacks perplex the people. The plague chases the screaming without pity and does not accept a treasure for ransom. Its engine<sup>70</sup> is far-reaching. The plague enters into the house and swears it will not leave except with all of its inhabitants. "I have an order from the *qāḍī* to arrest all those in the house." Among the benefits of this order is the removal of one's hopes and the improvement of his earthly works. It awakens men from their indifference for the provisioning of their final journey.

<sup>63</sup> This is clearly inconsistent with the belief that plague is a mercy and a martyrdom for the Muslim. The idea of plague as God's punishment on mankind was the predominant European Christian interpretation, based on Biblical and classical sources.

<sup>64</sup> This refers to the miasmatic theory of epidemics (see note 58 above).

<sup>65</sup> In Alexandria and Damascus the Black Death was interpreted, at least in part, as a warning and reproach from God for the communities' moral laxity; as a result, large quantities of wine were destroyed in both cities (al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, pt. 2, vol. 3, p. 777; J. Sauvaget, "Décrets Mamelouks de

Syrie," *Bulletin d'Études Orientales*, Damascus, vol. 2 [1932], p. 15).

<sup>66</sup> The ancient capital of the Cilician Armenian kingdom is reported to have suffered from the Black Death, apparently after Aleppo: al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, pt. 2, vol. 3, p. 774; see also V. F. Büchner, "Sīs," *EI*<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>67</sup> See note 8 above. This is the substance of Ibn Ḥajar's argument against infection ("Badhl al-mā'ūn," fol. 93b).

<sup>68</sup> *ṭā'ūn an-nasab*.

<sup>69</sup> *bārūd*: lit., "gunpowder."

<sup>70</sup> *dulāb*.

One man begs another to take care of his children, and one says goodbye to his neighbors.

A third perfects his works, and another prepares his shroud.

A fifth is reconciled with his enemies, and another treats his friends with kindness.

One is very generous; another makes friends with those who have betrayed him.

Another man puts aside his property;<sup>71</sup> one frees his servants.

One man changes his character while another mends his ways.

For this plague has captured all people and is about to send its ultimate destruction.

There is no protection today from it other than His mercy, praise to be God. (*p.* 188)

Nothing prevented us from running away from the plague except our devotion to the noble tradition.<sup>72</sup> Come then, seek the aid of God Almighty for raising the plague, for He is the best helper. Oh God, we call You better than anyone did before. We call You to raise from us the pestilence and plague. We do not take refuge in its removal other than with You. We do not depend on our good health against the plague but on You. We seek Your protection, Oh Lord of creation, from the blows of this stick. We ask for Your mercy which is wider than our sins even as they are the number of the sands and pebbles. We plead with You, by the most honored of the advocates, Muḥammad, the Prophet of mercy, that You take away from us this distress. Protect us from the evil and the torture and preserve us. For You are our sole support; what a perfect trustee!

<sup>71</sup> As a *waqf* (or *ḥabs*), "a pious endowment."

<sup>72</sup> *I.e.*, the prohibition against fleeing from a

plague-stricken land; see note 7 above.





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JERE L. BACHARACH  
University of Washington  
Seattle, Washington

DICKRAN K. KOUYMJIAN  
American University of Beirut  
Beirut, Lebanon



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